

Scientific Man
vs.
Power Politics

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CHAPTER I

THE DILEMMA OF SCIENTIFIC MAN

The Modern Temper

confidence
despair

TWO moods determine the attitude of our civilization to the social world: confidence in the power of reason, as represented by modern science, to solve the social problems of our age and despair at the ever renewed failure of scientific reason to solve them. That mood of despair is not new to our civilization, nor is it peculiar to it. The intellectual and moral history of mankind is the story of inner insecurity, of the anticipation of impending doom, of metaphysical anxieties. These are rooted in the situation of man as a creature which, being conscious of itself, has lost its animal innocence and security and is now forever striving to recapture this innocence and security in religious, moral, and social worlds of its own. What is new in the present situation is not the existence of these anxieties in popular feeling but their strength and confusion, on the one hand, and their absence in the main currents of philosophy and political thought, on the other.

Lord Bryce quotes the statement "that the American Government and Constitution are based on the theology of Calvin and the philosophy of Hobbes," and he adds, "Compare this spirit with the enthusiastic optimism of the Frenchmen of 1789." He might as well have added, "Compare this spirit with the philosophy of our age." The strangeness to the

modern mind of the theology of Calvin and the philosophy of Hobbes testifies to the enormity of the gap which separates the philosophy of our age from the prerationalist tradition. By the same token, this gap separates also the main currents of modern philosophy from popular feeling, whose disquiet is thus deepened by the absence of a meaningful response in philosophical thought.

Yet the very crisis of our civilization reveals itself in the tenacity with which it clings to its assumptions in the face of ever more potent signs that its rationalist philosophy cannot give meaning to the experiences of the mid-twentieth century. Our civilization assumes that the social world is susceptible to rational control conceived after the model of the natural sciences, while the experiences, domestic and international, of the age contradict this assumption. However, instead of asking itself whether an assumption such as this is in need of revision, the age defends its assumptions to the utmost and, by doing so, involves itself still deeper in the contradictions between its philosophy and its experience. In the end, the ever widening gap between philosophy and experience paralyzes both thought and action. The age becomes unable to accept either its invalid philosophy (for its experience contradicts it) or a more valid alternative (for its insecure philosophy cannot admit of change); it can no longer face either its unsolved problems or their solutions. It becomes an age, first, of uneasy confusion, then, of cynical despair; and, finally, it risks being overwhelmed by the enemies from within and from without.

The Crisis of Philosophy

When speaking of philosophy we are referring to the largely unconscious intellectual assumptions by which the

age lives, its basic convictions as to the nature of man and society, which give meaning to thought and action. The main characteristic of this philosophy is the reliance on reason to find through a series of logical deductions from either postulated or empirical premises the truths of philosophy, ethics, and politics alike, and through its own inner force to re-create reality in the image of these truths. This philosophy has found its classical realization in the rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet its influence extends beyond these centuries and, as a mode of thought apart from any particular school of philosophy, dominates the modern mind. While rationalism in the classical sense derives its postulates from a priori premises, since the latter part of the eighteenth century, philosophy has tended to seek its foundation in experience and to become a science. Aside from the continuing influence which the original rationalistic philosophy exerts in our civilization under the guise of scientific terminologies, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rationalism and the mode of thought prevailing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have, however, two qualities in common, both of which are rooted in rationalistic assumptions: the conception of the social and the physical world as being intelligible through the same rational processes, however these processes are to be defined, and the conviction that understanding in terms of these rational processes is all that is needed for the rational control of the social and the physical world. From the seventeenth century to the present, rationalism has maintained the unity under reason of the social and the physical world and the ability of the human mind to mold both worlds through the application of the same rational principles.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the belief in

science has been the main manifestation of this mode of thought. This belief in science is the one intellectual trait which sets our age apart from preceding periods of history. Whatever different philosophic, economic, and political beliefs people may hold, they are united in the conviction that science is able, at least potentially, to solve all the problems of man. In this view, the problems of society and nature are essentially identical and the solution of social problems depends upon the quantitative extension of the method of the natural sciences to the social sphere. This is the common ground on which Jeremy Bentham and Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer and John Dewey take their stand.

On the political scene this mode of thought is most typically represented by the political philosophy of liberalism. Yet it is not limited to the adherents of liberal political principles but permeates nonliberal thought as well and has thus become typical of the political thinking of the age. Whatever else may separate the White House from the Kremlin, liberals from conservatives, all share the belief that if not now, at least ultimately, politics can be replaced by science, however differently defined.

The rationalist mode of thought has remained virtually unchanged since the turn of the eighteenth century, while conditions of life in the same period have undergone the most profound changes in recorded history. We think in terms of the outgoing eighteenth century and live in terms of the mid-twentieth. If the philosophical and political ideas of the eighteenth century would represent eternal verities under the conditions of a particular time and place, they would be able to guide the thought and action of our time as well as of any other. There have been philosophies which were at least partly of this kind, such as the political philos-

ophies of Plato and Aristotle, but the philosophy of the eighteenth century is not among them. It is, on the contrary, a philosophical structure which gives the appearance of eternal verities to certain anthropological, social, and political assumptions which are true, if at all, only under the conditions of a particular historic experience. The historic experience of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the middle classes has given way to different historic configurations, but the philosophy of that epoch still dominates the Western mind as though its tenets were not subject to the revising processes of history.

The philosophy of rationalism has misunderstood the nature of man, the nature of the social world, and the nature of reason itself. It does not see that man's nature has three dimensions: biological, rational, and spiritual. By neglecting the biological impulses and spiritual aspirations of man, it misconstrues the function reason fulfils within the whole of human existence; it distorts the problem of ethics, especially in the political field; and it perverts the natural sciences into an instrument of social salvation for which neither their own nature nor the nature of the social world fits them.

As a political philosophy, rationalism has misconstrued the nature of politics and of political action altogether. The period between the two world wars, which saw its triumph in theory and in practice, witnessed also its intellectual, moral, and political bankruptcy. History, it is true, has its accidents. Its course, if we can believe Pascal, would have been different had Cleopatra's nose been shorter. Yet the political and military catastrophes of the thirties and early forties and the political crises of the mid-forties bear too uniform a pattern to be attributed to accidents or to the shortcomings of individuals alone. They are but the outward mani-

festations of an intellectual, moral, and political disease which has its roots in the basic philosophic assumptions of the age.

The Challenge of Fascism

It would be tempting yet rash to take it for granted that those who believe in these assumptions were victorious in war because they believe in them. Military victory proves only what it actually signifies: that militarily one group of men is superior to another. Those men may also excel in philosophic insight, moral wisdom, and statecraft; but if they do, they do so by virtue of their excellence in these respective fields and not because they have shown themselves to be adept in the art of warfare. The monopoly of the atomic bomb may coincide with a monopoly in virtue; but no necessity makes the latter an attribute of the former. The fact alone that Western civilization could completely misunderstand the intellectual, moral, and political challenge of fascism and be brought to the brink of disaster by those very forces it had defeated on the battlefield but twenty years before should raise doubts in the soundness of its philosophy, morality, and statecraft.

The very appearance of fascism not only in Germany and Italy but in our own midst ought to have convinced us that the age of reason, of progress, and of peace, as we understood it from the teachings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had become a reminiscence of the past. Fascism is not, as we prefer to believe, a mere temporary retrogression into irrationality, an atavistic revival of autocratic and barbaric rule. In its mastery of the technological attainments and potentialities of the age, it is truly progressive—were not the propaganda machine of Goebbels and the gas chambers of Himmler models of technical rationality?—and in its denial of the ethics of Western civilization it reaps the harvest of a

philosophy which clings to the tenets of Western civilization without understanding its foundations. In a sense it is, like all real revolutions, but the receiver of the bankrupt age that preceded it.

The Answer

Not only the condition of Western civilization but also the task of its defender can be learned from the experience of fascism. For the gap between the conditions of life and the official philosophies, which today threatens to swallow Western civilization, preceded the triumph of fascism in Europe. Man, even the most "practical" one who is most contemptuous of enterprises such as the one undertaken by this book, cannot live without a philosophy which gives meaning to his existence, by explaining it in terms of causality, rationalizing it in terms of philosophy proper, and justifying it in terms of ethics. A philosophy as a system of intellectual assumptions is static; life is in constant flux. Life is always in a "period of transition," by which standard phrase the age reveals its embarrassment at its intellectual inability to cope with the experience of modern life. In the face of this contradiction between philosophy and experience, it is the easiest thing in the world to stick to one's philosophic guns and, pointing to the intellectual and moral excellence of one's philosophy, to substitute for the creative revisions and revolutions of true philosophy the sterile incantations of a self-sufficient dogmatism.

Intellectual victories, however, are not won that way. The dominance of a philosophy over its age and its fecundity for the future are not determined by the standards of a seminar in logic or metaphysics but by its relation to the life experiences of the common man. That philosophy wins out in the competition of the market place, which, with greater faith-

fulness than any other, makes explicit and meaningful what the man in the street but dimly perceives yet strongly feels.

Man may continue to live for a while with a philosophy which falls short of this standard. He may still believe in its assumptions, listen to its exhortations, and wonder in confusion what is true and false, good and evil, right and wrong in this conflict between the known dogmas of the old philosophy and the felt experiences of the new life. Yet man will not forever accept a philosophy which is patently at odds with his experience. He will not forever listen to "appeals to reason" when he experiences the power of irrational forces over his own life and the lives of his fellow-men. He will not forever believe in "progress" when the comparison between his own moral and social experience and those of his ancestors shows him that there is no such thing. He will not forever cherish the redeeming powers of science which demonstrates through its results its moral ambiguity in its own sphere and its scientific ambiguity in the social world. He will not forever accept as true the essentially harmonious constitution of human existence when his inner and outer life bears the marks of constant conflict and strife.

Man will not live without answers to his questions, and when the answers are not forthcoming from the traditional custodians of Western thought, he will look for them elsewhere. He will turn to any philosophy which seems to be less at variance with his experience than the one in which he can no longer believe. So the Germans rejected, with rationalism and liberalism, the whole Western tradition and embraced in fascism a philosophy which promised to reinterpret their experiences, to guide their actions, and to create a new society. Fascism failed as a practical philosophy because it did not understand the nature of man, who is not only an object of political manipulation but also a moral person en-

dowed with resources which do not yield to manipulation. The failure of fascism and its defeat in battle have given Western civilization another chance to re-examine its own philosophy, to revise its own assumptions, and to reconcile its traditions with the experiences and exigencies of modern life.

Such a task is not extraordinary but is a familiar one to all creative ages. All philosophies tend to elevate their truths into suppositions of absolute validity, based upon the authority of reason and claiming the objectivity of what the modern age calls science. It is for each succeeding age to examine this claim in the light of its own experiences and to reject it where a truth, qualified by the conditions of time and place, tries to perpetuate itself in a new epoch. Thus, the scientia of ancient civilization was superseded by Christian philosophy, which introduced a new inner experience into the consciousness of the Western world. This new philosophy calcified into the pseudo-scientific dogmatism of some of the medieval schools, which in turn were overcome by a new philosophy born of the experience of experimental science. The ability of an age to perform such a task of rejuvenation, which is also a task of destruction, is the measure of its intellectual vitality.

The failure of the dogmatic scientism of our age to explain the social and, more particularly, political problems of this age and to give guidance for successful action calls for a re-examination of these problems in the light of the pre-rationalist Western tradition. This re-examination must start with the assumption that power politics, rooted in the lust for power which is common to all men, is for this reason inseparable from social life itself. In order to eliminate from the political sphere not power politics—which is beyond the ability of any political philosophy or system—but the destruc-

tiveness of power politics, rational faculties are needed which are different from, and superior to, the reason of the scientific age.

Politics must be understood through reason, yet it is not in reason that it finds its model. The principles of scientific reason are always simple, consistent, and abstract; the social world is always complicated, incongruous, and concrete. To apply the former to the latter is either futile, in that the social reality remains impervious to the attack of that "one-eyed reason, deficient in its vision of depth"; or it is fatal, in that it will bring about results destructive of the intended purpose. Politics is an art and not a science, and what is required for its mastery is not the rationality of the engineer but the wisdom and the moral strength of the statesman. The social world, deaf to the appeal to reason pure and simple, yields only to that intricate combination of moral and material pressures which the art of the statesman creates and maintains.

Contemptuous of power politics and incapable of the statesmanship which alone is able to master it, the age has tried to make politics a science. By doing so, it has demonstrated its intellectual confusion, moral blindness, and political decay. A book such as this can picture the disease but cannot cure it. More especially, it must leave the production of neat and rational solutions to those who believe in the philosophy against which this book is written. It must deprive the reader of that exhilaration which the rational solution of an oversimplified problem, from the single tax to the outlawry of war, so easily imparts. Yet, if it might lift the veil of oblivion from a truth once known, it would do for the theory and, in the long run, for the practice of politics all that a book can do.

CHAPTER II

THE AGE OF SCIENCE AND THE SOCIAL WORLD

Rationalism

AS RATIONALISM sees it, the world is governed by laws which are accessible to human reason. In the last analysis, there exists a fundamental identity between the human mind and the laws which govern the world; one and the same reason reigns over both. It is this identity which enables man to understand the causes of events and, by creating causes through his reasonable action, to make himself the master of events. This new belief in the creative power of reason grew out of the experiences which, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had awakened and, with each new experience, strengthened the confidence of the human mind in itself.

It was in the field of physical nature that these experiences occurred. The great geographical discoveries and the new insights of Copernicus, Bruno, Kepler, and Galileo stand out as landmarks; in Francis Bacon they find their philosophical manifestation. The seventeenth century saw in the works of Descartes and Newton, of Leibnitz and Vico the crowning achievements of the new philosophy. When, at the turn of the eighteenth century, this philosophy seemed to be at the threshold of its full practical confirmation, Laplace could

assert that a sufficiently great mathematician, given the distribution of the particles in the primitive nebula, could predict the whole future of the world.

In the intellectual atmosphere of this approaching triumph, the first attempts were made to extend the new way of thinking to the social world and to discover the natural laws of social intercourse which, in both their rationality and universality, would correspond to the laws of physics. Man was no longer considered exempt from the subjection to the rational laws which determine the physical world. One body of laws governs man and nature alike and, by learning to understand those laws, man will not only be able to guide the physical world to his needs but also to mold his destiny intelligently and to become the master of his fate. "Our consideration of human nature in relation to welfare . . .," wrote E. L. Thorndike recently, "has shown that man has the possibility of almost complete control of his fate, and that if he fails it will be by the ignorance or folly of men." As De Maistre said of the earlier representatives of this philosophy: "The eighteenth century, which distrusted itself in nothing, hesitated at nothing."

Hugo Grotius is the first to develop, in his philosophy of the "natural system," the idea of a world governed throughout by objective laws whose existence is independent of a divine will and which are intelligible to human reason. Hooker had already anticipated this development, in so far as the perception of the laws of nature is concerned, by asserting that they are "investigable by Reason, without the help of Revelation super-natural and divine." Now Grotius developed the same conception with respect to the origin of the laws of nature by expressing the blasphemous thought that, even if God did not exist, natural law would still exist.

Grotius

Thus, he took the decisive step from the concept of a theological world, whose divine government is above human understanding as well as action, to the concept of an inherently rational world of which man is a part and which he can understand and act upon. Starting with the same philosophical premises, Hobbes created the picture of a social world which is subject to the same mechanical laws which govern physical nature and, hence, to the same iron necessity of the causal law. It was to this kind of universe that Laplace referred when he remarked to Napoleon: "Sire, in this system there is no need of God." The Abbé de Saint-Pierre's suggestion to the king of France that he establish a political academy of forty experts to advise him in the government of the kingdom is the first practical application of this philosophy to political affairs and, thus, the first step toward a political science in the modern pragmatic sense.

The Four Conclusions from Rationalism

From the fundamental concept that man and world are governed by rational laws which human reason is able to understand and apply, rationalistic philosophy draws four conclusions. First, that the rationally right and the ethically good are identical. Second, that the rationally right action is of necessity the successful one. Third, that education leads man to the rationally right, hence, good and successful, action. Fourth, that the laws of reason, as applied to the social sphere, are universal in their application.

Conclusions
drawn
from
rationalism

It was through lack of reason that evil came into the world. This is the original sin by which man has disturbed the order of the world. Since the essence of world and man is reason, man will perform his task in the world by living up to the commands of reason. The good life is the life conducted in

accordance with those commands. It is upon this same relationship to the commands of reason that success and failure of human actions depend. As conformity with the laws of nature guarantees success in the physical world, so in the social world does compliance with the laws of reason. If all men followed reason, the conflicts which separate them would disappear or, at worst, be resolved in compromise; the wants from which they suffer would be satisfied; the fears which destroy their lives would be dispelled; and harmony, welfare, and happiness would reign. The perfect world is the world in which all obey the commands of reason. This is what both ethics and expediency demand. Goodness and success are the price for conformity to these commands.

Ethics

An action which falls short of what ethics prescribes and expediency demands indicates a lack of knowledge of the natural laws of reason. Injustice is ignorance applied to human action. The bad as well as the unsuccessful man is the unreasonable man, and the unreasonable man is the ignorant man who can be made good and reasonable by learning what reason requires. When he acts wrongly, it is not because he is bad or incapable by nature but because he does not know better. "What we fight," asserts Sir Norman Angell, "is not evil intention; it is social stupidity." John Dewey describes this conception of ethics in these words: "Hume proclaims that morals is about to become an experimental science. Just as, almost in our own day, Mill's interest in a method for social science led him to reformulate the logic of experimental inquiry, so all the great men of the Enlightenment were in search for the organon of morals which should repeat the physical triumphs of Newton. Ben-

tham notes that physics has had its Bacon and Newton; that morals has had its Bacon in Helvetius, but still awaits its Newton; and he leaves us in no doubt that at the moment of writing he was ready, modestly but firmly, to fill the waiting niche with its missing figure." Thus education and enlightening propaganda become the chief weapons in the hands of the already enlightened for the betterment of human affairs.

In this world of rationalism, emotions, whenever their existence is recognized at all, have only a subordinate role to play. Theirs is no longer a decisive part in the struggle of reason for supremacy. For the prerationalistic age, the passions are the exponent of evil, the great antagonist of reason; in the philosophy of rationalism they are "noble," ready to follow the guidance of reason. It is not in them that evil lies but in wrong thinking, in lack of reason. The shortcomings of man, especially in the field of action, therefore, are to be remedied not by reforming the domain of the emotions but only by improving the reasoning faculties of man. One is reminded of Rousseau's explanation of Madame de Warens' moral weakness, which he attributes not to the corruption of her passions but to bad reasoning, that is, to a series of faulty logical deductions suggested to her by her seducer.

It was only one step from this rationalization of ethics to the disappearance of ethics as an autonomous system of norms, distinct from empirical fact. Upon the distinction and strict separation of the ought-to-be and the to-be, the normative and the empirical, traditional ethics is founded. The ethical command, conceived in terms of the divine will or of the reasonable nature of man, transcends the empirical sphere and belongs to the world of norms, ends, and values. The nineteenth century abandons this dichotomy in a development which starts with Kant's formalization of the ethical

imperative and ends with Comte's identification of ethical rule and scientific law. The deductive reason of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had fallen victim to Hume's and Kant's criticism, and the normative character of the ethical command follows the deductive method into oblivion. Reason, conceived as empirical science, is supposed to supply the rules of human conduct by showing the different results correlated with different actions.

Where ethics is still recognized as an independent sphere, it is relegated to religion, a private domain such as family or art, where man may satisfy his emotional needs. The dual morality of the age has here one of its roots. Yet, this private domain where normative ethics may still find refuge is regarded as a residue from a prescientific age, which will not survive the coming of the age of science. With the coming of this age, normative ethics and religion itself will disappear, to be replaced by rational science.

In scientific ethics, the selective principle by which to distinguish between good and evil, reasonable and unreasonable actions, is the principle of utility. This principle is understood to mean, in a positive sense, the calculable and calculated regularity of action, the improvement of the conditions of living, and the increase of the expectation of life; in a negative sense, the absence of passionate and violent action, the absence of hardship, sufferance, and want, and, finally, the avoidance of death. Whereas the good of traditional ethics can be achieved only through a struggle within the soul of man or through an act of divine grace, scientific ethics leads man toward perfection through the mere intellectual process of learning what is reasonable and good. Yet, in opposition to the platonic remembrance of the distinction between good and evil, which, like the principles of mathe-

matics, is pre-existent in the human soul, the ethical perfection of utilitarian rationalism consists simply in acquiring the empirical knowledge of how certain effects are co-ordinated with certain actions, that is, what good, in utilitarian terms, to expect from certain actions.

Education and Progress

Since no inherent disability bars man from knowing all that there is to be known in the empirical world, the distance between the actual state of human affairs and its perfection is of a merely quantitative nature and can be overcome by progressive accumulation of knowledge. As a physiocrat put it in 1768: "It will suffice to have that amount of capacity and patience which a child who is good at arithmetic employs, to become a good politician or a truly good citizen." What men do not yet know they will learn, and they will teach it to the ignorant, thus spreading ever more and more knowledge to more and more people. "What we principally thought of," said John Stuart Mill in his *Autobiography*, "was to alter people's opinions; to make them believe according to evidence, and know what was their real interest, which when they once knew, they would, we thought, by the instrument of opinion, enforce a regard to it upon one another." According to Ramsay MacDonald, "The Independent Labour Party . . . believes in the class conflict as a descriptive fact, but . . . does not regard it as supplying a political method. It strives to transform through education, through raising standards of mental and moral qualities, through the acceptance of programmes by reason of their justice, rationality, and wisdom."

It is, therefore, only a matter of time before man will have acquired all the knowledge necessary to solve the problems of the physical and social world. "As mankind

improve," to quote John Stuart Mill again, "the number of doctrines which are no longer disputed or doubted will be constantly on the increase; and the well-being of mankind may almost be measured by the number and gravity of the truths which have reached the point of being uncontested." The number of those truths which thus become the imperishable heritage of mankind cannot fail to increase constantly since they are derived from reason itself by a mere process of logical deduction. Reason is everywhere and at all times identical with itself; so are the principles of logical deduction. Men everywhere and at all times partake of both. A principle of reason, such as justice or freedom or charity, once recognized as true, will always be so recognized. Whenever a social problem requires solution, the principle of reason will yield it through the mere subsumption of the facts under the principles. Social problems, then, are very much like mathematical problems. They can all be solved and their solution is implicit in the very essence of reason from which it is to be evolved through a chain of logical deductions.

No wonder, then, that this philosophy has an essentially optimistic outlook. Since man has the faculty of attaining perfection in reason, he has also the faculty of attaining perfection in goodness and success. Most problems confronting man could be solved immediately if only sufficiently instructed men were to apply the laws of reason, and the rest can be solved similarly in the course of time when more instruction and research will have given more useful knowledge to more men. While the prerationalistic age looked to the other world for salvation, rationalism finds the promise of perfection here and now. The belief in inevitable progress and in the unlimited perfectibility of human affairs is thus the necessary conclusion which rationalistic philosophy

reaches and from which it derives faith in its soundness as a system of philosophy and in the practicability of its postulates. "So complete," said John Stuart Mill in his *Autobiography*, "was my father's reliance on the influence of reason over the minds of mankind whenever it is allowed to reach them, that he felt as if all would be gained, if the whole population were taught to read, if all sorts of opinions were allowed to be expressed to them by word and in writing, and if by means of the suffrage they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinions they adopted."

The Political Philosophy of Liberalism

This philosophy was transformed into a political theory and applied to actual political problems under conditions which were dominated by the conflict between the rising middle classes and the feudal state. It was as the main moral, intellectual, and political weapon of the rising middle classes that rationalistic philosophy became the foundation for political theory and practice and, as such, has never lost the imprint of these historic origins. This combination of rationalistic philosophy and the moral, intellectual, and political needs of the rising middle classes was to become a fateful one in both domestic and international affairs; for in this combination lie the strength of this political philosophy and its weakness as well. This political philosophy was victorious wherever there existed a political situation similar to the one which had created it or where the philosophical premises from which it derived were not completely identified with any one political situation, so that they could be adapted to new ones. Under such circumstances, this combination between rationalism and the interests of the middle classes was a source of intellectual and political strength; for the inter-

pretation of a political situation in terms of the immutable postulates of reason was no less powerful an ideological weapon than the invocation of religion, tradition, and custom by which the feudal order justified its existence.

On the other hand, this political school failed and was bound to fail wherever it tried to achieve its aims without modification of its original intellectual premises and political methods under conditions which differed essentially from those under which it had originated. Convinced that this political philosophy was justified in the light of reason and was, therefore, beyond the reach of historical change, the nineteenth century neglected the fleeting element of historic time and place which had gone into the making of its political thought and upon the presence of which both the theoretical soundness and practical feasibility of this philosophy depended. Forgetful of the historic relativity of all political philosophy, the nineteenth century elevated the product of a unique historic and philosophic configuration into an immutable system of rational suppositions and postulates to be applied, regardless of historic conditions, everywhere and at all times. Such a political philosophy could not fail to be out of tune with the realities of the situation wherever the essential conditions of its origin were absent.

What were those conditions? What were the interests to be defended? What were the enemies to be held at bay?

Rationalism and the Interests of the Middle Classes

The middle classes had developed an economic and social system which was dominated by certain rational laws. Their observance was the essential condition for success within the system, and very soon a set of mores developed which gave these laws ethical dignity as well. Individual violation from

within was obviously stupid, sometimes immoral, and was punished with economic failure and social condemnation. It was different with a social and economic system such as feudalism, which not only refused to follow those rational laws but also interfered with their operation and, through the instrumentalities of the state, endeavored to take advantage of the fruits of their application. Such an attitude was a negation not only of temporal economic interests but of the very essence of the rational world which the middle classes were building. It was as a defense against this deadly interference of the feudal system in the rational processes of their social and economic world that the middle classes built up the political theory and practice of the nineteenth century.

This political philosophy is based upon a dual generalization of the social, economic, and political experience of the rising middle classes, interpreted in the light of the philosophy of rationalism. On the one hand, the rationality of this experience now becomes a logical part and an experimental confirmation of the rational concept of world and man. It now appears to be only a particular manifestation of the rationality of the world. As the Communist Manifesto puts it: "It [the bourgeoisie] has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about." Consequently, the feudal order stands condemned, not only as an isolated historic obstacle to the development of the middle classes but also as the incarnation of all backwardness and ignorance, of all the forces of darkness which disturb the rational order of nature and retard the arrival of the golden age of enlightenment and reason. "Aristocratic rule, the government of the Few in any of its shapes," said John Stuart Mill of his father's political philosophy, "being in his eyes the only thing which stood between mankind and an administration of their affairs by

the best wisdom to be found among them, was the object of his sternest disapprobation."

Since, on the other hand, it was by means of the state that feudalism barred the middle classes from the full use of their rational powers, the state became the archinterventionist that, by its very nature, is unable to build on the foundations of reason but will only destroy what reason has built. Since, finally, the state as social agent makes use of its sovereign political power which asserts itself in political institutions and derives its legitimacy from tradition, the historic hostility against feudalism is transformed into philosophical antagonism to the state, tradition, politics, and violence, as such. The state, tradition, politics, and violence come to be regarded as something alien to the true order of things, as a kind of outside disturbance like a disease or a natural catastrophe. Society vs. state, law vs. politics, man vs. institutions, reason vs. tradition, order vs. violence—such are the battle cries of liberalism, and this dichotomy between the true, good order of things, dominated by reason, and its political perversion has determined the course of nineteenth-century political thought.

This hostility to the state so dominates the age that even a thinker critical of the spirit of the times shows its traces. "Life in the state," says the Prussian philosopher Fichte, "does not belong among the absolute ends of men, whatever a very great man [Hegel] may say about that; but it is a means, existing only under certain conditions, for the establishment of a perfect society. The state, like all human institutions which are mere means, is bent on its own destruction; it is the purpose of all government to make government superfluous." In Emerson's essay "Politics," the dichotomy is transposed into spiritual terms. "To educate the wise man,

the State exists; and with the appearance of the wise man, the State expires. The appearance of character makes the State unnecessary." Marxian philosophy poses the same opposition in economic terms; the state appears as the product of the class struggle, bound to disappear with the latter. To our own day, the symbolic force of these generalizations and identifications has remained effective in many philosophical and political concepts, e.g., in the concept of the intellectual darkness of the Middle Ages taken as symbol of the pre-liberal world, and of the essential moral and pragmatic inferiority of the state to private initiative. Paine's statement that society is the outcome of our virtues, government of our wickedness, has lost nothing of its convincing power over the liberal mind.

What, then, are the means which the middle classes employ to protect their world against the nonconformist from within and the enemy from without? This world reposes, as we know, in its philosophical postulates as well as in its practical needs, upon the rationality of its elements. As the actual world falls short of this ideal and is ever menaced by irrational forces from within and without, it becomes the main concern of the nineteenth century to hold at bay and destroy the enemies from within and to insulate the rational world against those from without, to restrict their sphere gradually, and to extend the borders of the rational world correspondingly.

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The Rule of Law and the Liberal Institutions

The means by which the nineteenth century essays to achieve these dual ends is the rule of law. The idea of a coherent system of legal rules regulating the relationships of men is intimately related, logically as well as historically, to

the general philosophy of rationalism. Such a system of legal rules, coherent, precise, and calculable like the laws of physics, or, as Grotius, Leibnitz, and many others preferred to think, like the principles of mathematics, is only the image, created by men and endowed with human sanctions, of the rational order which dominates the world. It is in the idea of secularized natural law, as developed by Grotius, that the concept of a coherent system of positive legislation originated in the eighteenth century in France, Austria, and Prussia. Positive law, so to speak, comes to the support of the laws of reason which, in this stage of human development, have only an incomplete chance of being realized by their own inner force alone; the "positive order" adds to the power of reason, inherent in the "natural order," the sanctions of state and society.

Thus the legal order endeavors to guarantee the smooth operation of the laws of reason in the economic and social sphere of the middle classes. With respect to disturbances from within this sphere, the civil and criminal laws fulfil this function. As regards interference from without, that is, on the part of the feudal powers and their state, the movement toward constitutional government pursues the same aim, by building, as a member of the English House of Commons put it in 1610, a "wall betwixt the king and his subjects." The respective spheres of government and citizen are again determined by the principles of natural law as they manifest themselves in the legal instrumentalities of the Bill of Rights and similar constitutional guaranties.

For the advancement of its aims, classical liberalism developed three institutions: written constitutions which would envelop the rational sphere of economic and social endeavor in an armor of legal guaranties and, at the same

time, compel the irrational forces of the state into a system of legal chains from which these forces were supposed never to escape; second, independent courts which, as the mouth-pieces of reason, would discern the reasonable from the unreasonable in the conflicting claims of less enlightened parties and see to it that legal rules be applied in accordance with the laws of reason; finally, popularly elected parliaments which would subject apparently conflicting views and interests to the test of reason through intelligent discussion and resolve those conflicts either in a compromise, as the experimental manifestation of the harmony of interests inherent in human affairs, or in a decision of the majority through which reason asserts itself against the unenlightened few. "The best test of truth," according to the famous epigram of Mr. Justice Holmes, "is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market."

Social Reform

These ideas and institutions led liberalism to victory over the feudal state, and the classical liberals were convinced that upon this philosophical basis and with these intellectual tools the liberal society could safely be built. Within the framework of those liberal safeguards, reason, revealing itself in the laws of economics, would reign supreme and of necessity bring about harmony and the welfare of all. It was at this point that the Gladstonian liberals, the evolutionary socialists, the adherents of the General Welfare State and social reformers of all denominations split from the classical liberals of the Manchester School and added to the liberal philosophy another fundamental idea: the concept of social reform.

Neither this concept nor the possibility of its realization is

self-evident. The Middle Ages and even the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show scarcely a trace of the idea of social reform as a philosophical proposition, let alone as a program for action. It was from the experience of his actual mastery over physical nature through reason that man gained confidence in the general transforming powers of reason. Similarly, it was not until the triumph of liberal rationality over the forces of feudal darkness had provided experimental proof of the power of reason in social affairs that the abstract concept of progress, inherent, as we have seen, in the philosophy of rationalism, was transformed into the political idea of social reform. And this political experience, which was the midwife at its birth, should dominate its life in a peculiar and truly fateful way.

We have already pointed out that liberalism identified the historic antagonism between the middle classes and the feudal order with the opposition of metaphysical absolutes: good and evil, light and darkness, reason and ignorance, law and politics, society and state, order and violence. Hence, the destruction of feudalism and the erection of the liberal state meant more for the liberal mind than one historic event among many others; it meant the final victory of the forces of goodness, light, reason, law, and order over those of evil, darkness, ignorance, domination, and violence. With the feudal order those forces had disappeared from the earth, and reason was thus on its way to ultimate victory.

Yet, whereas the classical liberals believed in the ability of reason to win this victory through its sheer inner force without human intervention, the social reformers felt that positive legislation on a scientific basis was necessary to make reason prevail within the framework of the liberal state. The departure from the original liberal position, which the idea

of social reform implied, however, was far less great than classical liberals and social reformers alike supposed it to be. For both agreed that with the destruction of feudalism and autocracy the age of reason will come. They only differed with reference to the way in which this transition can be achieved. Yet even the idea of automatic progress predominant in classical liberal thought is still of the essence of social reform, only, as it were, at one remove. Even though the philosophy of social reform negates the classical conviction that reason would prevail without human intervention, it maintains the belief in the ability of reason to prevail through its sheer inner force, once the legislative process has embodied in positive legislation the scientific formula which reason suggests for the solution of the social problem. The belief in the redeeming power of the rule of law, which through its mere existence reforms the conditions of man, is only the classical belief in the autonomous powers of reason on another level of concretization. The cry for a new piece of legislation as the first and last resort of social reform is but the echo of the appeal to reason pure and simple with which classical liberalism thought to exorcise the problems of social life.

The Scientific Approach

For the liberal reformer the domestic problems which remained to be solved after the fall of the feudal state were of a nonpolitical, rather technical nature, analogous to those with which the physicist and the technician have to deal. Like the latter, they would be solved, one after the other, by the inevitable accumulation of more and more knowledge. Social problems, then, become mere scientific propositions which, like mathematical and physical problems, can all be solved

rationaly and with finality, once the right formula is discovered. Darwin, giving experimental proof to the philosophical conviction that nature and man are subject to the same rational laws, immensely stimulated this trend toward extending scientific methods to social problems.

The very field of politics thus becomes a kind of atavistic residue from a prerational period. Since politics is arbitrariness and chance, just as science is order and regularity, science fits perfectly into this picture of the social world. It becomes the beneficial force which will solve the problems with which politics is unable to cope. It becomes the substitute for politics. According to John Dewey, "The resource that has not been tried on any large scale in the broad field of human, social relationships is the utilization of organized intelligence, the manifold benefits and values of which we have substantial evidence of in the narrower fields of science." E. L. Thorndike advises us that "governments should make more use of scientific methods in arriving at their decisions, especially the method of the weighted average. In doubtful cases, a person should as a rule make his decisions after jotting down the facts pro and con, assigning weights to each, and summing the weights. He may include his intuitions and 'hunches' with such weight as seems fit. The opinions of other persons pro and con may be included with the more objective facts or kept as a separate account to be combined at the end. The opinions should be weighted according to the intimacy of the person's knowledge, his expertness in the field, and his general good sense. Making such weighted decisions will on the whole save time and reduce strain and worry." Elton Mayo wonders that "current texts on politics still quote Aristotle, Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the books of other authors. What chemist finds need of quoting

Thales and the alchemists? His claims are based on his own skill and his capacity for experimental demonstration. In sociology and political science there does not seem to be any equivalent capacity for the direct demonstration of a usable skill in a particular situation at a given time. . . . If our social skills (that is, our ability to secure cooperation between people) had advanced step by step with our technical skills, there would not have been another European war."

Hence, politics should be "reformed" and "rationalized." Political maneuvering should be replaced by the scientific "plan," the political decision by the scientific "solution," the politician by the "expert," the statesman by the "brain-truster," the legislator by the "legal engineer." The technical efficiency of the business enterprise becomes the standard for the evaluation of governmental activities, the "business administration" the ideal of governmental perfection. Even revolution becomes a "science," the revolutionary leader the "engineer of the revolution." Since Bentham, English liberalism thinks of legislation as an applied science. According to Thomas G. Masaryk, "Modern democracy does not aim at rule at all, but at administration. . . . How this new conception, this new estimate, of state organisation can be carried out in practice is no mere question of power; it is a difficult problem of *administrative technique*." For Charles A. Beard, "a thousand experiences of political life bear witness that a treatise on causation in politics would be the most welcome contribution which a scholar of scientific training and temper could make." "The principles of democracy are," according to C. Delisle Burns, "merely the principles of science applied to public policy," and "democracy is the discovery of new truth." "Our magazine," writes Clarence K. Streit's *Freedom and Union*, "has taken for its province the great

issue, how to raise man's political science to the level of his scientific and engineering achievements"; and in the hands of John Dewey the problem of morality becomes "an engineering issue." "If six hundred scientists working together can produce the atom bomb," says the chairman of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, "then six hundred scientists could be put to work on the job of inter-group hatreds." He predicts that their combined efforts could end such hatreds within twenty-five years.

Art is not immune from the scientific approach either. "The artist," says Jacques Barzun of the spirit of modern art, "must defend himself in print and show how others are wrong, for all artists are presumably seeking 'solutions' to contemporary problems. At any one time only one solution is valid, hence only one artist has 'the answer.' The artist is made into a kind of research scientist and sociologist combined. . . . To avoid frivolity, art must teach, alter the course of history, and regenerate mankind. It deals, in short, with the conduct of the will, the improvement of the State and the purification of the soul." Impressionism and expressionism, cubism and surrealism search for the method which will solve the problem of art once and for all. Justice, according to Joseph Joubert, is "truth in action." Even "mercy is scientific," Lincoln Steffens wrote on the occasion of the McNamara trial.

The scientific spirit penetrates even religious thought. In his will establishing the Gifford Lectureship in natural theology, Lord Gifford wrote in 1881: "I wish the lectures to treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science, that of Infinite Being, without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special, exceptional or so-called miraculous revela-

tion. I wish it considered just as astronomy or chemistry is." As if in consummation of this wish, an advertisement in the *Washington Evening Star* of April 24, 1946, announces that "religion becomes demonstrable science" and compares the satisfaction brought by Christian Science to the one derived from the modern uses of electricity. When, in the hour of his death, John Quincy Adams looked at the failure of his life, founded on the belief in education and science, he doubted not science but God. And is it not significant that even so astute a critic of this philosophy as Reinhold Niebuhr seems to substitute a scientific for a dogmatic criterion of religious truth when he writes: "It is important to recognize this lack of conformity to the facts of experience as a criterion of heresy"?

No political thinker can expect to be heard who would not, at least in his terminology, pay tribute to the spirit of science and, by claiming his propositions to be "realistic," "technical," or "experimental," assume their compliance with scientific standards. We have a moving account of this intellectual trend by a leading German liberal who, in 1866, after Bismarck had crushed the Prussian liberal party, wrote this melancholy confession: "We unconsciously transferred scientific method to the practice of politics. . . . After having put our parliamentary motions on a theoretical basis which could not be disputed from any quarter, we thought that now the truth would win by its own inner force. Thus discussion absorbed our best efforts: had we won in the debate, we were contented, but when the one weak in arguments showed himself to be strong in actions we submitted to it as to an injustice of fate and consoled ourselves with the thought of being at least right. The whole unfortunate

policy of resolutions is in a certain way the result of this confusion of science and politics.”

A contemporary account, rendered by the liberal writer Michael Straight after the congressional elections of 1942, expresses the same melancholy recognition of this inherent quality of the liberal mind: “Again we are failing. We have learned almost nothing from our previous failures. We are as confused, as isolated, as unorganized as we ever were. We are as willing to sit on the fence and lecture to the grasshoppers about our superior ‘objectivity’ as we ever were. We are as willing to become again the kept opposition of an outworn but ruthless system as we ever were. We stand now in grave danger of failing again. Millions may pay the price for our final failure.”

This scientific element has become the dominating mode of political thought in the Western world. Where, in times past, the irrational lust for power pursued its violent game, now reason would reign supreme through the medium of the political scientist, the economist, the sociologist, the psychologist, etc. This political philosophy thus ends in a scientific theory of society where politics has, at best, a place as the evil finally overcome. This mode of thought has permeated the thinking of friend and foe alike. Whereas the conservative of the modern age turns to the historic past and expects from the science of history the answer to the riddle of the present, the liberal sees in history only a process through which reason realizes itself in time and space. The scientific approach is common to both. For the liberal, science is a prophecy confirmed by reason; for the conservative, it is the revelation of the past confirmed by experience.

Marx, in this respect, proves himself to be a true son of the nineteenth century when, opposing the utopian socialists

in the name of science, he endeavors to chart scientifically the future course of history in whose final stage politics will disappear and be replaced by technical functions. Marxian science aims at combating the irrationality of social organization through rational reform or revolution while liberal science attacks the ignorance of the individual mind through education and meets socialism in its attempts at social reform. Marx simply transfers the liberal confidence in the rational powers of the individual to the class. The individual may be mistaken in his interests, the class never. The latter will act in terms of its class interests, that is, of reason, once it knows what its interest is. With respect to the class, there exists, in other words, a necessary correspondence between knowledge and action. That is what liberalism assumes with respect to the individual.

A critic of the scientific tradition like James Harvey Robinson remains within this same tradition when he wants science to become more scientific than it is. "How are mankind's guides and instructors," he asks, "to modernize their outlook in such a way as to free scientific intelligence from the suspicions which still beset it and assure it the influence to which it is entitled? This is the supreme problem of our age." All the blueprints for the good society, the perfect government, the more abundant life, have in this scientific attitude their intellectual roots.

Forty years ago, Lester Ward could thus describe the approaching age of science: Legislative bodies "will doubtless need to be maintained, and every new law should be finally adopted by a vote of such bodies, but more and more this will become a merely formal way of putting the final sanction of society on decisions that have been carefully worked out in what may be called the sociological laboratory. Legislation

will consist in a series of exhaustive experiments on the part of true scientific sociologists and sociological inventors working on the problems of social physics from the practical point of view. It will undertake to solve not only questions of general interest to the State . . . but questions of social improvement, the amelioration of the condition of all the people, the removal of whatever privations may still remain, and the adoption of means to the positive increase of the social welfare, in short the organization of human happiness." Robert S. Lynd's *Knowledge for What?* is, in our day, a perfect example of this mode of thought. When Alvin H. Hansen in his *Fiscal Policy and the Business Cycle* analyzes the inherent weaknesses of our economic system and the economic crises inevitably resulting therefrom, his main contribution to the political problem of reform consists in the call for more intelligent action, the "bold social engineering" of scientist philosophy. According to Ferdinand Lundberg, the solution of the problem of the freedom of the press consists in "putting the press into the hands of scientific-minded personnel who will operate in accordance with values laid down by boards of public-minded men of the highest calibre."

Professor Gallup invents "the new science of public opinion measurement." When Karl Mannheim searches for the principles upon which the reconstruction of man and society could be based, his scholarship culminates in an elaborate suggestion for social planning. For him as well as for George B. Galloway scientific planning is the answer to all social problems of our time. "The twentieth century," says the latter, "is certainly the Plan Age." "The problems of planning in America embrace all the problems of human relations in a modern industrial society."

Rare, indeed, is the social scientist who will say, as Bernard

Glueck did a few years ago with regard to the problem of alcoholism: "It is difficult not to be somewhat amused by this general tendency to put all faith in more research as the solution."

Identification of Ethics, Science, and Politics

This intellectual trend not only made politics merge into science, it also led to the identification of science with ethics. The leading thought of the prerationalist age conceived of the convergence of ethics and politics as an ultimate possibility, a goal to be reached through the unceasing aspiration of the individual for virtue. For a sophist like Thrasymachus there was no possibility of convergence at all since the political sphere was governed exclusively by the rules of the political art of which ethical evaluation was a mere ideological by-product. For a realist like Machiavelli convergence was possible only as an accident, if what was required by the rules of the political art—the primary concern of the political actor—happened to coincide with what was required by the rules of ethics. Only for nineteenth-century thought is the identity of ethics and politics more than a remote possibility to be achieved at best by the virtuous few; it is an actuality of our daily experience wherever political action conforms to the findings of science. Conformity with the abstract logical sequences of a rational scientific scheme is the first political and ethical postulate of this philosophy. The political polemic takes on the qualities of a scientific disputation. Inconsistency in politics—that is, deviation from the rational scheme—is not only politically unsound but also ethically damnable. Thus the scientific solution of a political problem implies a positive ethical judgment. The scientifically correct, hence politically sound, solution is of necessity the

one required by ethics. The morally wrong cannot be politically right. Sincerity—that is, harmony between motive and action—and consistency—that is, harmony between the elements of a chain of thoughts or actions—become the highest values of ethics, science, and politics alike.

A political conflict resolves itself not only in a scientific controversy but also in an ethical antagonism, and the political opponent becomes a scientific and ethical opponent as well. Yet the liberal will feel the full measure of his superiority only when he can prove to the world and to himself the righteousness of his position and the moral baseness of the enemy who must be punished for his crimes. In this, the liberal is entirely sincere, and it is exactly this sincere belief in the unquestionable justice of his cause, these profoundly serious convictions, unmarred by even the shadow of a doubt, this complete absence of cynical design, which distinguishes the liberal from other political types and makes him a little bit of a Don Quixote on the political scene. Gladstone, Wilson, and Briand, for instance, bear the unmistakable marks of this quality.

It is this political type which Lord Morley must have had in mind when he wrote of the consequences for England of Carlyle's "poetised utilitarianism, or illumined positivity." "One might suppose," says he, "from the tone of opinion among us, not only that the difference between right and wrong marks the most important aspect of conduct, which would be true; but that it marks the only aspect of it that exists, or that is worth considering, which is most profoundly false. Nowhere has Puritanism done us more harm than in thus leading us to take all breadth, and colour, and diversity, and fine discrimination, out of our judgments of men, reducing them to thin, narrow, and superficial pronouncements

upon the letter of their morality, or the precise conformity of their opinions to accepted standards of truth, religious or other. Among other evils which it has inflicted, this inability to conceive of conduct except as either right or wrong, and, correspondingly in the intellectual order, of teaching except as either true or false, is at the bottom of that fatal spirit of *parti-pris* which has led to the rooting of so much injustice, disorder, immobility, and darkness in English intelligence. No excess of morality, we may be sure, has followed this excessive adoption of the exclusively moral standard. . . . We have simply got for our pains a most unlovely leanness of judgment, and ever since the days when this temper set in until now, when a wholesome rebellion is afoot, it has steadily and powerfully tended to straiten character, to make action mechanical, and to impoverish art."

Lost Teachings of History

From this triple identification of the political, scientific, and ethical stems the enormous self-confidence and conceit with which liberalism gives its adherents intellectual security and a good conscience. Were its followers unsuccessful in politics, they still were convinced of being "right" in both the intellectual and ethical sense; and it could only be because of the particular wickedness of the enemy, the irrationality of political interference, and the ignorance of mankind in general that they failed. Therefore, they never learn from history. For them, history is important only as confirmation of, or deviation from, the rational scheme with which they approach the political reality. "There is," says Harold J. Laski of the liberals, "no sense of the historical element in politics. Variety of fact is not allowed to disturb their desire for ample and simple conclusions." History, therefore, has

provided them in the main with false analogies but has taught them nothing. What Carl L. Becker has said of the eighteenth-century philosophers is true of their nineteenth- and twentieth-century heirs: "The eighteenth century Philosophers, like the medieval scholastics, held fast to a revealed body of knowledge, and they were unwilling and unable to learn anything from history which could not . . . be reconciled with their faith."

This philosophy recognizes only two forces determining the historic process: reason, and unreason as its counterpart. It conceives of the historic process as a struggle between those two forces with reason steadily gaining ground and certain of ultimate victory. Reason, however, by its very nature, is not itself a product of the historic process. It is one and the same regardless of time and place. It is before and above all history. History cannot add to or detract from reason; it provides only a succession of experiences which give man the opportunity to found the dominion of reason over human affairs. That we can speak of historic development at all is due only to the failure of man to make full use of this opportunity. When history, on the one hand, is the scene of reason's march to victory, it is, on the other, the scene of the revolt of ignorance and wickedness against the supremacy of reason. Without this revolt there would be no history at all. "It ought always to be remembered," said Mr. Justice Holmes, "that historic continuity with the past is not a duty, it is only a necessity." Yet, confronted with the realization of this necessity, the nineteenth-century mind is given only to expressing its moral indignation and to reaffirming its belief in the powers of reason. For the understanding of the autonomous forces which engender historic necessity

in their own right and not as a mere deviation from reason, there is no place in this philosophy of history.

Therefore, the adherents of this political school never learn from their failures. They have an inveterate tendency to stick to their assumptions and to suffer constant defeat from experience rather than to change their assumptions in the light of contradicting facts. Instead of inducing them to revise theory and practice in the light of their experience, failure only calls forth a renewed effort with essentially the same means. Since they are right, they have only to try again; and once the wicked enemies are destroyed, the irrational procedures of politics are transformed into the rationality of technical functions, and education has had its enlightening effect upon the good but ignorant, they are bound to succeed.

The history of modern international thought in particular is in the main the history of this sterility of the modern mind. What Rousseau said of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre is true of this whole trend of international thought: "He figured out nicely that one only needed to convoke a conference and propose the articles of his plan: that they would be signed and everything would be in order. Let us agree that in all projects this honest man saw quite well the effect of things once they had been established; but he was like a child in judging the means to establish them." All the schemes and devices by which great humanitarians and shrewd politicians endeavored to reorganize the relations between states on the basis of law, have failed to stand the trial of history. Instead of asking whether the devices were adequate to the problems which they were supposed to solve, the internationalists take the appropriateness of the devices for granted and blame the facts for the failure. "When the facts behave otherwise than we have predicted," they seem to say, "too bad for the facts."

Not unlike the sorcerers of primitive ages, they attempt to exorcise social evils by the indefatigable repetition of magic formulas. As it was said of Briand, they act like St. Louis while it is necessary to act like Talleyrand.

With wearying monotony, unperturbed by failure and unaffected by criticism, this philosophy, since its very inception, has offered the same remedies and advanced the same arguments. Hume and many after him realized that rationalism is unable to solve the problems of religion and ethics. Burke, Goethe, and the Romantics realized that rationalism is unable to solve the problem of history. William Graham Sumner realized that rationalism is unable to solve the problem of society. In our day, Reinhold Niebuhr has repudiated the claims of rationalism in all its manifestations, and Alfred North Whitehead has called upon rationalism to "transcend itself by recurrence to the concrete in search of inspiration." Yet, as far as the modern climate of opinion is concerned, those thinkers might as well never have recorded any of their thoughts. Similarly, Rousseau's polemic against the Abbé de Saint-Pierre contains all the principal arguments which may be advanced against the rationalist position in international affairs. Yet one looks in vain for any influence of Rousseau's trenchant criticism upon the succeeding development of international thought. To this development we shall turn now.

CHAPTER III

THE REPUDIATION OF POLITICS

WHILE domestic liberalism converted public opinion in the eighteenth century and conquered the political institutions of the Western world during the nineteenth, it was not before the end of the Napoleonic Wars that important sectors of public opinion demanded the application of liberal principles to international affairs. And it was not before the turn of the century that the Hague Peace Conferences made the first systematic attempt at establishing the reign of liberalism in the international field. Yet only the end of the first World War saw, in the League of Nations, the triumph of liberalism on the international scene.

Two streams of thought made this development possible. One originated in the rationalist philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and brought the principles of this philosophy directly to bear on the problems of international relations. It is significant, pointing to a more than coincidental relationship between the philosophy of rationalism and modern international thought, that the two men whom we recognize as pioneers of the philosophy of reason in the social sphere, Grotius and the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, are also the two great initiators of this intellectual development. Its influence remained, during the whole eighteenth century, in the realm of pure thought, giving rise to abstract

systems of international law and to Utopian blueprints for the perfect international society. Only after it had joined the other stream of thought, represented in the political experience of domestic liberalism, were the theory and practice of modern foreign policy born.

After rationalist philosophy, in its liberal manifestation, had passed successfully its domestic trial, the general idea of extending those same principles to the international field was transformed into a concrete political program to be put to the test of actual realization. Now the promoters of liberal foreign policy found, in philosophers like Grotius, in reformers like the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, theoretical confirmation and practical support of their aims. It is important to keep in mind the dual intellectual source of this foreign policy and the preponderance of the domestic experience of a triumphant liberalism. For here lies the clue to the understanding of the theoretical and practical approach of the modern mind to the international sphere; of the conception it has developed of the nature of international relations; of the means it has suggested for the solution of international problems; of the failures which have followed its every step on the international scene; and of the final disaster which has threatened its very survival in the domestic field as well.

What, then, is the liberal conception of foreign affairs? What are the means by which liberalism endeavors to master international relations? What is the essence of liberal foreign policy?

Foreign Policy without Politics

Thucydides, Machiavelli, Richelieu, Hamilton, or Disraeli would conceive the nature of international politics as an unending struggle for survival and power. It is true that,

even before modern international thought entered the field, this conception of international affairs was under constant attack. From the Church Fathers to the anti-Machiavellian writers of the eighteenth century, international politics was made the object of moral condemnation. But modern international thought goes further. It denies not only the moral value of political power which proves nothing as over against the rational values of truth and justice; it denies, if not the very existence of power politics as a matter of fact, at least its organic and inevitable connection with the life of man in society. Francis Bacon only prophesied that the empire of man over nature would replace the empire of man over man. For the leading international thought of the nineteenth century, this prophecy had come true. "Nations," said Bentham, "are associates and not rivals in the grand social enterprise." This concept of international affairs found in Herbert Spencer's philosophy its systematic development, in Wilson's foreign policy its most consistent and consequential realization.

The relations between nations are not essentially different from the relations between individuals; they are only relations between individuals on a wider scale. "The intercourse between communities," said Cobden in his speech on the arbitration motion in June, 1849, "is not more than the intercourse of individuals in the aggregate." And since the relations between individuals are essentially peaceful, orderly, and rational, there is no reason why relations between nations should be different. Consequently, relations between individuals should serve as the model for international relations, which should be assimilated to the former until all differences between both will have disappeared. "We are at the beginning of an age," said Wilson in his mes-

sage to Congress on April 2, 1917, "in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong done shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among the individual citizens of civilized states."

As long as the remnants of the feudal age still make foreign policy their playground, domestic policy should at least take precedence over foreign affairs, especially the financial resources of the nations should be used to improve the former and not to further the latter. The opposition of the British liberals, under Cobden and Bright, to the Palmerstonian concept of foreign policy and of British liberalism in general to any active colonial policy as such; the conflicts between German liberalism and Bismarck, at least before 1866; the traditional reluctance of liberal parties, all over the world, to vote for military expenditures—all these have their intellectual roots in the same predominant interest in domestic policies and a corresponding lack of concern with foreign affairs.

The emphasis upon domestic policies to the detriment of foreign affairs has an old and, from the view of the latter, unsuccessful tradition. Plato maintained that the question of power was irrelevant for the evaluation of the state, and advocated *apragmosyne*, that is, inactivity in foreign affairs, renunciation of foreign policy altogether. "The essential thing for every citizen," said Rousseau, "is the observation of the domestic laws, private property, and personal security. As long as everything is all right with regard to those three issues, let the authorities negotiate and deal with the foreign powers; the dangers to be most afraid of do not come from this direction." Léon Blum's declaring, in 1932, that "the more danger there is in the world, the more necessary it is to disarm"; and the British labor party's opposing rearma-

ment as late as 1938, both remain within the same intellectual and political tradition.

In its practical attitudes toward international problems no less than in its theoretical attempts to comprehend the nature of foreign affairs, this school of thought proceeds as though the political element did not exist or were, at best, an accidental attribute of international relations, bound to disappear in the near future. "For politics, you know, I do not care," wrote the future statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt to Goethe from Paris in 1798. "At some future election," said Cobden, "we may probably see the test 'no foreign politics' applied to those who offer to become the representatives of free constituencies." Paul S. Reinsch reports that "when Portugal became a republic, the proposal was made to abolish all diplomatic posts and have the international business of Portugal administered by consuls. That would eliminate politics from foreign relations." In our days the opposition to an active foreign policy is justified by the urgency of domestic problems.

Liberalism was led to this attitude by its domestic experience. It had come to identify the aspiration for power over man, which is the essence of politics, with the particular manifestation of this lust for domination, which was part of its historic experience, that is, the domination of the middle classes by the aristocracy. Consequently, it identified opposition to aristocratic politics with hostility against any kind of politics. On the other hand, the middle classes developed a system of indirect domination which replaced the military method of open violence with the invisible chains of economic dependence and which hid the very existence of power relations behind a network of seemingly equalitarian legal rules. Liberalism was unable to see the political nature

of these intellectualized relations which seemed to be essentially different from what had gone, so far, under the name of politics and, therefore, identified politics in its aristocratic, that is, open and violent form, with politics as such. The struggle, then, for political power—in domestic as well as in international affairs—was only a historical accident, coincident with autocratic government and bound to disappear when the latter would go. The attempts, in the domestic field, to reduce the political functions to technical ones and the international policy of nonintervention as conceived and practiced by some of the early and most of the latter-day liberals were only two manifestations of the same aspiration: the reduction of the traditionally political sphere to a minimum and its ultimate disappearance. The foreign policy of nonintervention was the liberal principle of laissez faire, transferred to the international scene; and the optimistic trust in the harmonizing power of the "course of events," the "natural development," and the "laws of nature" was the justification of both domestic and international inertia.

Pacifist Liberalism

It follows necessarily from this general conception of international politics that liberalism is essentially pacifist and hostile to war as the outstanding and most consequential manifestation of the lust for power in the international field. War has always been abhorred as a scourge, but within the political philosophy of liberalism this abhorrence takes on a novel meaning. In ancient times and in the Middle Ages, war was regarded as an evil which, with the inevitability of a natural catastrophe, destroys material values and human lives. Not only does liberalism stand in horror of the gruesome spectacle of war, not only does it condemn war as a

moral outrage; it also, and primarily, argues against war as against something irrational, unreasonable, an aristocratic pastime or totalitarian atavism which has no place in a rational world. War is essentially a thing of the past. It belongs, according to Herbert Spencer, to the age of militarism and will, of necessity, become obsolete in our industrial civilization "in which men can appease their greedy instincts by the productive investment of capital." Hence war is "dead" and "impossible." War does not solve anything. War does not pay. It is an unproductive investment; it is, as Eméric Crucé recognized as early as the seventeenth century, "without profit." Nobody has ever won a war. War is "The Great Illusion." "There never was," as Benjamin Franklin wrote to Josiah Quincy on September 17, 1773, "a good war or a bad peace." Even Wellington's remark that "there is nothing worse than winning a war except losing it" contains an element of this rationalist pacifism.

At the basis of this conception there is again the domestic experience of liberalism. Liberal philosophy, unaware of the limited character of this experience, gave it a universal meaning and transplanted it to the international scene. "It is the essence of Liberalism," says L. T. Hobhouse, "to oppose the use of force, the basis of all tyranny." The middle classes have an innate aversion to violent action. For them, organized violence is the dreaded enemy. The occupations of the middle classes are primarily of a commercial or a professional nature, whereas their historic enemies, the aristocracy, were brought up in the tradition of the use of arms. Whenever a decision between the middle classes and the aristocracy depended upon the use of arms, the aristocracy had the initial advantage. Even in the daily life of individuals, this superiority was a constant temptation for the aristocrats

to deprive the middle classes of the fruits of their labor by violent means and thus was a constant threat to the survival and economic welfare of the members of the middle classes. The latter came to experience in violence the negation of all the values which they cherished; and they put the stigma of immorality and irrationality on its use. And irrational it actually is from the standpoint of the philosophical, social, and economic systems which the middle classes developed.

These systems are founded upon a mechanical interplay of natural forces, which is subject to calculable rational laws. Peace is a necessary condition for the functioning of these systems and for the realization of their goal, which is the domination of nature by human reason. From the standpoint of those systems, organized violence indeed does not pay; it cannot solve any of their problems; and there is nothing to be won by using it. "A war in the midst of different trading nations," Diderot noticed, "is a fire disadvantageous to all. It is a process which threatens the fortune of a great merchant and makes his debtors turn pale." According to Kant, "the commercial spirit cannot co-exist with war."

"Panic in the Funds, and great fluctuations," noted John Bright in his diaries during the Crimean War. "War disturbs everything. It has destroyed the session, and will greatly injure, if not disgrace the country. . . . Our carpet trade grievously injured by War raising price of tow [flax]." A typical example of this mode of thought is to be found almost a century and a half before in the *Spectator's* characterization of Sir Andrew Freeport: "He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts; and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valor, and that

sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He . . . says that England may be richer than other kingdoms by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men. . . . There is a way of managing an argument, which is made use of by states and communities, when they draw up a hundred thousand disputants on each side, and convince one another by dint of sword. A certain great monarch was so sensible of his strength in this way of reasoning, that he writ upon his great guns—*ratio ultima regum*. 'The logic of kings'; but God be thanked, he is now pretty well buffed at his own weapons. When one has to do with a philosopher of this kind, one should remember the old gentleman's saying, who had been engaged in an argument with one of the Roman emperors. Upon his friend's telling him, that he wondered he would give up the question when he had visibly the better of the dispute; 'I am never ashamed,' says he, 'to be confuted by one who is master of fifty legions.' "

There is no place for violence in a rational system of society. It is therefore a vital—practical as well as intellectual—concern of the middle classes to avoid outside interference, especially violent interference, with the delicate mechanics of the social and economic system, which stands for the rationality of the world at large. By elevating this concern to a philosophical and political postulate of absolute validity, liberalism overlooked the singularity as well as the exceptional character of the experience in which it originated. For the absence of organized violence during long periods of history is, in domestic no less than in international relations, the exception rather than the rule.

Furthermore, liberalism is on safe ground when it opposes violence in the domestic field; for there it has replaced to a considerable degree domination by actual violence with a

system of indirect domination, originating in the particular needs of the middle classes and giving them the advantage in the struggle for political power. International politics, however, has never outgrown the "preliberal" stage. Even where legal relations hide relations of power, power is to be understood in terms of violence, actual and potential; and potential violence tends here always to turn into actual warfare. The distinction between the latter and peace is not one of essence but of degree; it is one of alternative choices, not of exclusive preference, among different means in the pursuit of power. The development toward a sharp distinction between international war and peace, which in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seemed to equate the international to the domestic situation, was of a superficial, technical nature, concomitant with changing methods of warfare and international politics in general, and did not affect the ever present threat of actual violence, which in the international sphere is inherent in what is called a state of peace.

Liberals are unaware of this fundamental difference between domestic and international politics in the liberal era. They mistake the increasing definiteness of the distinction between war and peace for a general development toward peace and away from war. Deceived by the apparent similarity between international and domestic peace during this era and transferring their domestic experience to the international scene, they equate the distinction between war and peace to the one between autocratic violence and liberal rationality. Thus liberalism detached the specific techniques it had developed as instruments of its domestic domination, such as legal pledges, judicial machinery, economic transactions, from their political substratum and transferred them as self-sufficient entities, devoid of their original political func-

tions, to the international sphere. Charles H. McIlwain has said of the doctrine of *laissez faire* that it was "surely one of the strangest fantasies that ever discredited human reason." Its application to international affairs led to catastrophic results. Liberals had brought themselves to see in violence the absolute evil and were thus prevented by their moral convictions from using violence where the use of violence was required by the rules of the game. They fought their international battles with weapons which had been effective against the domestic enemy under the conditions of domestic politics. Taken out of their proper political context and transferred to the international arena where violence reigns supreme, those weapons became wooden swords, playthings conveying to political children the illusion of arms.

But liberal condemnation of war is absolute only in the ethical and philosophical sphere and with respect to the ultimate political goal. In immediate political application, this condemnation is qualified and holds true only for wars which are opposed or irrelevant to liberal aims. Thus, aristocratic and totalitarian wars are necessarily to be condemned. When, on the other hand, the use of arms is intended to bring the blessings of liberalism to peoples not yet enjoying them or to protect them against despotic aggression, the just end may justify means otherwise condemned. Hence, wars for national unification and wars against despotic governments are the legitimate wars of liberalism. Their legitimacy derives directly from the rationalistic premises of liberal political philosophy. For the two main manifestations of unreason, carried over from feudalism to the liberal age, are destroyed when peoples belonging to the same nation are freed from foreign domination and when despotic governments everywhere are replaced by democratic ones.

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"No peace can last, or ought to last," declared Wilson in his message to the Senate on January 22, 1917, "which does not recognize and accept the principle that Governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from potentate to potentate as if they were property." Referring to "the principles which call for self-government for all nations on the democratic basis of free and unfettered elections everywhere," the *New York Times* of June 7, 1946, stated: "If these principles were applied in eastern Europe as they have been in the West, and if border issues were settled by the free choice of the peoples involved, most of the problems now delaying peace would disappear." When all nations are united under their own governments and all governments are subject to democratic control, war will have lost its rational justification. Reason will reign and make wars impossible. For the reign of reason in international affairs will make impossible those fundamental conflicts for the solution of which it would be reasonable to wage war, and reason will provide instrumentalities by which the remaining conflicts can be settled peacefully. The war for national unification and for "making the world safe for democracy" is then indeed, as Wilson put it in his message to Congress on January 8, 1918, the "culminating and final war for human liberty," the "last war," the "war to end war." In the light of this analysis, those Wilsonian slogans reveal themselves to be more than a clever propagandistic device; they are the expression of an eschatological hope deeply imbedded in the very foundations of liberal foreign policy.

The same eschatological hope, based upon the same intellectual procedure, is to be found in the Marxian concep-

tion of the revolutionary war which will do away with the class war and with the international war arising from it, once and forever. When Marxism demonstrates that the universal triumph of socialism is a precondition of permanent peace, it applies the liberal categories to international affairs. As a matter of principle, socialism is opposed to war as such. In political practice this opposition is qualified and put into effect only with respect to the imperialistic wars of capitalism. The socialist war against capitalism, however, is justified. Aristocratic government as the source of all evil is replaced by capitalism, and the universal destruction of capitalism is taken to mean the end of evil itself. While liberalism expects the disappearance of war from the uniformity of governments after the pattern of democratic nationalism, Marxism connects the same hope with the universal acceptance of the socialist pattern. "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to," proclaims the Communist Manifesto, "the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end." The very idea of world revolution as the final struggle to end all struggles, national and international, is in its unhistoric abstractness the perfect counterpart of the national and democratic wars and revolutions, whose successful conclusion will bring about lasting peace.

Marx
+
liberals

Democratic Nationalism

There is deep significance and inner necessity in Wilson's being the outstanding example of liberalism in foreign affairs and at the same time the standard bearer of those slogans to

realize which the peacemakers of Versailles and Saint-Germain dedicated their main efforts. And their subsequent self-righteousness and inertia, as well as their moral indignation at any reappearance of the belligerent spirit, had their main source in the sincere belief that with the organization of Europe into national states under democratic governments every reasonable cause for war would disappear. Due to the same misconception of foreign affairs, the liberal statesmen of western Europe were intellectually and morally unable to resist German expansion as long as it appeared to be justified—as in the cases of Austria and the Sudetenland—by the holy principles of national unification. Since these were the very same principles, eternally true and universally valid, in which the liberal statesmen believed and for which their predecessors had fought, they did not see how they could well oppose them when others invoked them in their own behalf. “Self-determination, the professed principle of the Treaty of Versailles,” wrote the *London Times* with obvious pride on September 28, 1938, immediately after the Czechoslovakian crisis, “has been invoked by Herr Hitler against its written text, and his appeal has been allowed.”

For the same ideological reason the liberal statesmen hesitated to make common cause in international affairs with nations which did not seem entirely to meet the liberal standards. “Our political and philosophical fetishism . . . requests,” Georges Suarez stated of French foreign policy between the two world wars, “that the community of aspirations and ideas prevail over the community of interests. Some of our leftists and other politicians are Anglophile today and they were Germanophile yesterday, exclusively according to the political party or group being in power in Berlin or London. . . . Thus, Germany no longer interests some of

our socialists since she has fallen into the hands of the junkers and generals. Yet, let tomorrow the socialist Hermann Mueller return to power and Léon Blum will be moved again and again by the German tragedy." Why should men fight for a "hybrid" and "absurd" conglomeration of nationalities like the Czechoslovakian state, or for a "slave state" like Ethiopia? How could they make an alliance with a dictatorship like Russia? They would fight for democracy, yes. But was England a real democracy? And was not Pilsudski Poland one of the worst dictatorships on earth? They even felt duty-bound to lend active support to foreign interests when—as in the case of the so-called "injustices of Versailles"—the principles of liberal nationalism could be invoked in their behalf.

Logical deductions from abstract rational principles replaced in the liberal era the pragmatic decision of political issues according to the increase or decrease in political power to be expected. Political weapons were transformed into absolute truths. Thus, in the domestic field, the idea of democracy by which the rising middle class justified its quest for political power lost its concrete political function and survived as an abstract political philosophy which confines itself to claiming equal opportunity for everybody, powerful and weak alike, and, more particularly, to postulating the universal right to vote and to be elected. In its abstract formalism it does not see that democracy, as any other political system, functions only under certain intellectual, moral, and social conditions and that the unqualified principle of majority makes democracy defenseless against its enemies, who will use the democratic processes in order to destroy them. Freedom of speech, originally a principle by which religious and political minority groups tried to secure independence from

state interference, outgrew its political origin and belongs today exclusively to the sphere of natural rights which ought to be enjoyed by everybody within and without the national frontiers, even by the foe who claims the right only in order to be able to monopolize it. Freedom of the press, originating as a political weapon against the powerful and transformed into an abstract, unpolitical principle, now becomes a protective device of the powerful against control and competition. While in the nineteenth century the idea of the common good was understood in terms of the interests of the middle classes as over against an aristocratic minority, it is now interpreted as an abstract principle available to everybody and particularly to minorities which, by invoking it, try to forestall those very reforms which in the nineteenth century the middle classes could identify with the common good. When the Spanish Republic attempted, a hundred years late, to realize some of the liberal reforms against the opposition of a feudalistic minority, the philosopher Ortega y Gasset could invoke the abstract principle of the common good and exclaim: "The Republic exists for everybody." Since all reforms must be paid for by somebody, all reforms can now be opposed in the name of the common good, abstractly and formalistically conceived.

It was the same confusion between political aim and rational truth which prevented the liberal from opposing political aims in the international field when liberal principles were invoked in their support and, on the other hand, from supporting aspirations not based upon national or democratic principles. Until the downfall of the czarist regime, all liberals all over the world were invariably opposed to Russia and tried to influence the foreign policy of their countries correspondingly. Conversely, the German and especially the

Prussian conservatives, during the first decades of the German Empire, supported a foreign policy friendly to Russia because Russia was the most conservative of the Great Powers, whereas the German liberals during the same period favored an Anglophile foreign policy, for Great Britain was then the symbol of a parliamentary monarchy. Throughout the nineteenth century, American, British, and German liberals were deeply attached to the cause of Italian, Hungarian, and Polish nationalism. "What has decided me definitely for Poland, on the basis of my latest studies of Polish history," wrote Marx to Engels, "is the historical fact that all revolutions since 1789 measure their intensity and vitality pretty accurately by their conduct toward Poland. Poland is their 'external' thermometer."

In France, the decree of armed propaganda of November 18, 1792, is the first manifestation of liberalism in foreign affairs. "The National Convention declares in the name of the French nation that it shall accord fraternity and aid to all peoples who want to recover their liberty, and charges the executive power with giving to the generals the orders necessary to bring aid to those peoples and to defend the citizens who are or might be persecuted for the cause of liberty." On June 4, 1793, the Convention declared that "the French nation is the friend and natural ally of the free nations," a declaration which was confirmed by Article 118 of the Montagnard Constitution. Under the ministry of Casimir Périer, in 1831, a revolt broke out in Paris because the government did not give assistance to the Polish insurgents. After 1848, France was swayed by a wave of enthusiasm in favor of the Hungarian patriots. Michelet proclaimed as the mission of France "the deliverance of the other nations," and he, as well

as Victor Hugo and George Sand, dreamed of establishing a universal republic through national revolutions.

Palmerstonian interventionism and the "Bulgarian Atrocities" campaign in 1879, which led to Gladstone's overthrow of the Disraeli cabinet, illustrate the practical application of this liberal fallacy. It should be noted that Cobden, transferring the Manchester principle of *laissez faire* to international politics, did not share this fallacy and opposed it consistently in Palmerston's foreign policy. "I think," said Cobden in one of his speeches, "as a corporate body, as a political community, if we can manage to do what is right and true and just to each other—if we can manage to carry that at home, it will be about as much as we can do. I do not think I am responsible for seeing right and truth and justice carried out all over the world."

The foreign policy of the Comintern, based upon an ideological alliance with Communists everywhere, is another example of the same misconception; and its complete failure, from the point of view both of international communism and of Russian national interests, proves again the practical impossibility of founding a successful foreign policy upon ideological affinities rather than upon a community of political interests.

In the United States, however, the tradition of nonintervention, supported by the technical difficulties of effective intervention, during the nineteenth century prevented popular sympathies from being translated into political action. France did not lose her traditional common sense completely even during the ideological fervor of the Revolution. On April 13, 1793, Danton opposed the execution of the decree of November 18, 1792, quoted above, by showing that it could not be the business of France "to bring aid to some

patriots who would want to make a revolution in China." It was upon his initiative that the Convention amended the previous decree by declaring that "it would not meddle in any way in the government of other powers." Even a hundred years later, republican France, not yet deprived of her political instincts, did not hesitate to ally herself with the absolute monarchy of Russia. As for England, the Congress of Berlin had already settled the oriental question in favor of British imperial interests. Thus, in happy contrast to the 1930's and 1940's, the liberal fallacy did not then influence actual foreign policy.

In Germany, Bismarck knew what foreign policy was about and did not sacrifice Russia's friendship to Polish nationalism. Yet it was under his leadership that monarchical sentimentalism started to influence German foreign policy, a sentimentalism which, like its liberal counterpart, chose political associations according to constitutional affinities. The Treaty of the Triple Alliance of 1882 stated that its aim was "to fortify the monarchical principles and thereby to reassure the unimpaired maintenance of the social and political order in their respective states." Bismarck's distrust of England's foreign policy as dependent upon parliamentary consent anticipated the anti-British direction of the foreign policy of Wilhelm II, under whose regime the monarchical and antidemocratic ideology became a determining factor in foreign affairs. The German foreign policy of this period is another example of the all-permeating influence of the liberal fallacy. Its victims are not only the liberal parties, properly speaking, but political groups of all denominations, whose political instincts are no longer strong. The foreign policy of Wilhelm II simply exchanged the frock coat of the liberal merchant for the mummeries of monarchical romanti-

cism and the rational language of Manchester liberalism for the Wagnerian bombast of a decadent divine-right philosophy. The essence of the approach to foreign affairs was the same. Here and there, there were the same misunderstanding of international politics and the same principles of association according to the affinities of domestic policies and institutions and not on the basis of a community of political interests. Here and there, a foreign policy based upon an unpolitical principle of association brought upon its protagonists the same disastrous results.

The decadence of this liberal approach to foreign alliances becomes obvious by comparison with the principles by which the preliberal period was guided in this respect. Francis I, Most Christian King of France, in order to break the supremacy of the Catholic Emperor Charles V, concluded alliances with the Protestant princes of Germany, with Henry VIII, founder of the Anglican church, and with the Mohammedan Sultan Soliman the Magnificent. Richelieu destroyed Protestantism in France but supported it in the international field wherever such support would hurt the Hapsburgs of Austria and Spain. As Hanotaux has well said of his policy: "France is not the champion of the Catholic cause; she is not the champion of the protestant cause." If preliberal foreign policy disregarded religious affinities, it was not less unconcerned about the congeniality of domestic policies. Mazarin not only maintained the religious *mésalliances* of Francis I and Richelieu with a consistency which earned him the name of "Turk and Saracen disguised as priest"; he also supported Cromwell against the English king even though his domestic aim was the establishment of the absolute monarchy under a king who was the nephew of Charles I of England.

War

Nationalism and liberalism have been intimately associated ever since the French middle classes destroyed the feudal state in the name of the French nation and since the Napoleonic Wars carried through Europe the idea of national sovereignty and solidarity as opposed to feudal oppression. National freedom came to be regarded as a prerequisite as well as a collective manifestation of individual freedom. For the historic experience of nineteenth-century Europe, oppression of national life and of national aspirations by the aristocratic rulers became the outstanding example of oppression and, therefore, was largely identified with oppression as such. National unity and freedom from oppression became one and the same thing, for the liberal as well as for the aristocratic rulers of the Holy Alliance. While the German liberals cried, "Through unity to liberty," Mazzini's flag of 1831 bore on one side the words "Unity and Independence," on the other "Liberty, Equality, Humanity." Metternich's policies, on the other hand, were opposed to the national movement as a manifestation of democratic tendencies. The foreign policy of Napoleon III, which favored the national movement, was ironically called "the diplomacy of universal suffrage."

The political and legal principles, originally formulated to support and to guarantee the freedom of the individual, were applied to the nation. The nation came to be regarded as a kind of collective personality with peculiar characteristics and inalienable rights of its own; and the typically liberal antithesis between individual freedom and feudalistic oppression was transferred to the nation where it was duplicated in the hostility between the national aspirations and the

feudal state. The nations should be free from oppression, both from within and from without. The popular will should decide how and by whom the people should be governed, and the determination of the state to which a people should belong, was part of this decision. National revolution as well national war could thus be justified.

The liberal justification of war for democracy and against despotism originated even more directly in the domestic experience of liberalism. The physiocrats believed that the princes could be persuaded to see the light of reason and that nations, regardless of their form of government, could then live peacefully together. Since Rousseau and Kant, who had been preceded by Spinoza, liberal thought has regarded the universality of democratic or republican governments as a prerequisite to permanent peace. By the end of the eighteenth century, the feudal state in its domestic activity had become the symbol and incarnation of all that is despotic, unreasonable, and prone to violence in this world; whereas the people, by their very nature, were regarded as being inclined to reason and peace. "A steadfast concert for peace," declared Wilson in his message to Congress on April 2, 1917, "can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honor, a partnership of opinion. Intrigue would eat its vitals away; the plottings of inner circles who could plan what they would and render account to no one would be a corruption seated at its very heart. Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own." The original refusal of the League of Nations to admit autocratic governments to membership, and a similar

attitude on the part of the United Nations, both have their roots in this same philosophy. It is also at the basis of organizations like the Interparliamentary Union.

It was only logical that liberalism should not restrict to the domestic sphere this evaluation and the political consequences to be drawn from it. For liberalism, domestic and foreign policy are aspects of one and the same thing. ← As Charles A. Beard put it: “Foreign policy is a phase of domestic policy, an inseparable phase,” and it is the latter which determines the former. The foreign policy of a nation is only the function of its domestic affairs; and upon the latter war and peace alike depend. The feudal governments, no less than the democratic peoples, when moving on the international scene, cannot act contrary to their very nature as it was revealed in the domestic field. Thus the domestic positions were simply transferred to the international scene. Democracy is peace, autocracy is war; the pacifist peoples vs. the warlike governments—such were the slogans in which the liberal attitude toward war expressed itself and in which it found its political program. Here again, Wilson is the most eloquent prophet of the new creed. “National purposes,” said he in his New York speech of September 27, 1918, “have fallen more and more into the background and the common purpose of enlightened mankind has taken their place. The counsels of plain men have become on all hands more simple and straightforward and more unified than the counsels of sophisticated men of affairs, who still retain the impression that they are playing a game of power and playing for high stakes. That is why I have said that this is a peoples’ war, not a statesmen’s. Statesmen must follow the clarified common thought or be broken.” If indeed those slogans spoke the truth, was it not imperative, in order to secure

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peace, to do away with autocratic governments and to set up democratic control over governments "everywhere in the world"? "The destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world," was one of the war aims proclaimed by Wilson in his Fourth of July speech in 1918. "It is our inestimable privilege to concert with men out of every nation who shall make not only the liberties of America secure but the liberties of every other people as well."

→ Since autocratic governments oppress in domestic affairs and make war on the international scene, a change in the form of government is all that is needed in order to end oppression and war. Public opinion would then exert its pacifying influence; secret diplomacy and secret treaties, the instruments
→ of autocratic government in international affairs, would be replaced by the democratic control of foreign policy. "Democratization of foreign affairs" is one of the great liberal aims, to which, during the first World War, the Western democracies dedicated a great number of books, articles, and organizations (e.g., the Union for Democratic Control in England). Here again, Wilson is the perfect interpreter of liberal thought. "It will be our wish and purpose," he said in his message to Congress on January 8, 1918, "that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world. It is this happy fact, now clear to the view of every public man whose thoughts do not still linger in an age that is dead and gone, which makes it possible for every nation

whose purposes are consistent with justice and the peace of the world to avow now or at any other time the objects it has in view." "Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at," proclaims the first of the Fourteen Points, "after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view." In our time the movement for a war referendum in the thirties, and the domestic opposition to international negotiations and decisions because of their secrecy are manifestations of the same trend of thought and of the same conviction that without complete and universal democracy there can be no peace. Where such a complete democratization of the affairs of state could not be brought about by peaceful means, it could, for the very sake of the abolition of war, be done by force. The democratic revolution as well as the democratic war could thus be justified.

The eschatological hopes which inspired the liberal wars for national unification and democratic liberation came to naught. In his speech of April 30, 1823, Canning had already warned, however, in vain, that "the general acquisition of free institutions is not necessarily a security for general peace." Whereas domestic institutions and policies, on the one hand, and foreign policies, on the other, are indeed organically connected, the connection is by no means as simple as liberalism believes it to be. Liberalism believes that the foreign policy of a country is the mere reflection of its domestic situation, so that, by transforming the latter, one is able to change the former at will. Actually, however, the foreign policy of a country is determined by many different factors, of which the form of government and domestic policies are two and, as history shows, not the most decisive ones. The fundamental foreign policies of the Great Powers have sur-

vived all changes in the form of government and in domestic policies; France, Great Britain, and Russia during the last two hundred years are cases in point. Continuity in foreign affairs is not a matter of choice but a necessity; for it derives from geography, national character, tradition, and the actual distribution of power, factors which no government is able to control but which it can neglect only at the risk of failure.

→ Consequently, the question of war and peace is decided in consideration of these permanent factors, regardless of the form of government under which a nation happens to live and of the domestic policies it happens to pursue at a certain moment of history. Nations are "peace-loving" under certain historic conditions and are warlike under others, and it is not the form of government or domestic policies which makes them so.

Veit Valentin has by implication demonstrated the absurdity of the attempt at correlating the form of government and foreign policy. In an article "Are Republics More Peaceful?" he reverses the liberal position and tries to make history show that monarchies are more peace-loving than are republics. "Great monarchies," wrote the Duke Albert de Broglie in 1863, "honestly at peace have been seen rarely but sometimes: great republics, neighbors without being enemies, never!" According to Paul S. Reinsch, "Lord Cromer believes in general that democracies are not peaceful, and he refers particularly to the American democracy for proof; Lord Lytton said, 'Governments are generally for diplomacy, the people for war.'" These authors cannot fail to be as successful as the opposing school of thought since, indeed, in certain periods of history certain monarchies, in contradistinction to certain republics, have sought to maintain international peace. Whether one tries to make the world safe for mon-

archy or for democracy, it is not in that way that one makes it safe for peace.

The victories in the liberal wars, far from fulfilling the liberal hopes, even brought about the very evils which they were supposed to destroy. Far from being the "last wars," they were only the forerunners and pioneers of wars more destructive and extensive than any the liberal epoch had witnessed. National unification and democratic liberation, instead of doing away with the only remaining causes of war, intensified international antagonisms and made the broad masses of the peoples active participants in them. The unified nations, instead of being deprived of an incentive for war, now had the cohesion and emotional impetus necessary for policies of conquest, colonial and otherwise. International disputes, which formerly had been largely rivalries of princes and an aristocratic pastime, now became controversies between nations, where the interests of the peoples themselves appeared to be at stake and in which the peoples themselves had the opportunity to play a determining part. The triumph of nationalism and democracy, brought about by the liberal wars, therefore strengthened immensely the sovereignty of the state and with it the anarchical tendencies in international society. The particularism of democratic nationalism was thus bound to be the foremost obstacle to the realization of those devices, such as free trade, international law, international organization, by which liberalism endeavored to secure international peace. In a tragic contradiction of Shakespearean dimensions, liberalism in the international field was to be destroyed by the very forces it had, if not created, at least helped to dominate the Western world.

A very wise liberal, as early as 1874, gave voice to the liberal disillusionment strangely born of success and failure

alike. Lord Morley, after enumerating the national and democratic aspirations of liberalism, continues: "It may be said that the very fate of these aspirations has had a blighting effect on public enthusiasm and the capacity of feeling it. Not only have most of them now been fulfilled, and so passed from aspiration to actuality, but the results of their fulfilment have been so disappointing as to make us wonder whether it is really worth while to pray, when to have our prayers granted carries the world so very slight a way forward. The Austrian is no longer in Italy; the Pope has ceased to be master in Rome; the patriots of Hungary are now in possession of their rights, and have become friends of their old oppressors; the negro slave has been transformed into an American citizen. At home, again, the gods have listened to our vows. Parliament has been reformed, and the long-desired mechanical security provided for the voter's freedom. We no longer aspire after all these things, you may say because our hopes have been realised and our dreams have come true. It is possible that the comparatively prosaic results before our eyes at the end of all have thrown a chill over our political imagination. . . . The old aspirations have vanished, and no new ones have arisen in their place."

Decadent Liberalism

Faced by the dangers which the very fulfilment of the liberal aspirations had created, liberalism finally abandoned the exceptions to its pacifist attitude. These exceptions had found their positive expression in the universal requirement of national states under democratic governments as a prerequisite to permanent international peace. The liberal justification of wars for democracy and national liberation was indeed always qualified in practical application by the abso-

lute condemnation of preventive wars. The idea that a nation should wage war against another nation in anticipation of a war planned by the latter has never been accepted by liberal theory and practice. As a rule, liberal governments have fought their wars not upon a free choice between war and peace, nor at the moment most propitious to them, but upon the initiative of nonliberal governments which were resolved to pursue their aims even at the risk of war. Since we did not want to fight in 1931 or 1935 or 1938 on our terms, we had to fight in 1941 on the terms of the enemy.

Liberal wars are generally defensive wars; for only as such ← can they be justified in terms of liberal philosophy. The influence of this philosophy makes itself felt even in the sphere of military strategy and organization. The specialization of the French army for defense and its inability to attack, in 1914 as well as in 1940, was the direct result of the liberal prejudice against aggressive wars. Pearl Harbor has its intellectual background in this philosophy, which was unable to consider seriously even the possibility of enemy attack. The invariable hesitations and vacillations of liberal governments, when faced with a decision implying even the remote danger of war, are due to those inherent traits of liberal philosophy.

When in the period of liberal virility these pacifist traits clashed with the concern for national, democratic governments, the latter had a good chance of winning out. During the period of liberal decadence the original position of liberalism was reversed. Whereas liberalism in its heyday would intervene and even wage war for the promotion and protection of liberal positions in other countries, the decadent liberalism of the thirties was no longer willing to wage war for any cause, liberal or otherwise. For a foreign policy to take into consideration ideological differences, even for the sake

of national survival, would violate the principle of nonintervention which now was interpreted as holding true even in the face of totalitarian intervention. War was now regarded as an absolute evil, not only in the ethical and philosophical sphere but in the realm of political action as well. Hence any political decision avoiding war was better than one leading to war. Any move liberalism would make on the international scene was made with the reservation that it would not lead to war, even if that meant failure of the move itself. Recent history offers two typical examples of this suicidal logic. One is to be found in the Baldwin cabinet's attitude during the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, which Churchill has characterized in the following words: "First, the Prime Minister had declared that sanctions meant war; secondly, he was resolved that there must be no war; and thirdly, he decided upon sanctions. It was evidently impossible to comply with these three conditions." The other example is presented by the attitude of a large sector of American public opinion toward the second World War, which in 1941 was stated thus with classical simplicity: "The country wants to defend itself, aid Britain, and stay out of the war." Here again, it was evidently impossible to comply with these three conditions at the same time; and, here again, liberal pacifism would make Baldwin's choice.

Decadent liberalism still was convinced that democracy is peace and that autocracy, now resurgent as fascism, is at least potential war. But whereas classical liberalism had understood this opposition in the sense of different predominant tendencies of a nonexclusive character, decadent liberalism gave this opposition a nonpolitical and absolute meaning. Hence fascism and militarism, on the one hand, and democracy and love for peace, on the other, became synony-

mous; and democracy could not wage war without betraying its very principles to fascism. Yet, the ideological war of liberalism became thus a self-defeating absurdity. From this suicidal contradiction liberalism was saved only by a new foreign policy which, at least in its practice, followed the principles of political wisdom rather than of liberal philosophy.

Ideology vs. Politics

The liberal reluctance against waging war for other than liberal aims not only reveals the qualified pacifism which liberalism practiced in its heroic period; it is also indicative of a peculiar intellectual approach to political reality which characterizes liberalism in all stages of its historic development. This approach derives directly from the liberal misconception of international affairs as something essentially rational, where politics plays the role of a disease to be cured by means of reason. Liberalism, therefore, is able to accept only international aims which can be justified in the light of reason. Since, however, the rationalist conception of international affairs does not fit political reality where power is pitted against power for survival and supremacy, the liberal approach to international problems has necessarily an ideological quality. Liberalism expresses its aims in the international sphere not in terms of power politics, that is, on the basis of the international reality but in accordance with the rationalist premises of its own misconception. The liberal program in international affairs is a rationalist ideology of foreign politics.

"My objection to Liberalism is this," said Disraeli, "that it is the introduction into the practical business of life of the highest kind—namely politics—of philosophical ideas instead

of political principles." The abstract goal replaces the concrete issue; the standard of eternal truth, the consideration of political interests. During the Ethiopian crisis the Italians fought for the new Roman Empire, the English interceded for Article XVI of the Covenant of the League of Nations. In the first World War the Germans fought for Germany's "place in the sun" and the Allies for democracy, national self-determination, and permanent peace. Germany and Japan started the second World War for world domination while their democratic opponents took up arms for a new social order, the federation of the democracies, the four freedoms "everywhere in the world." The Axis fought for empires, the liberal opposes aggression regardless of where, by whom, and against whom it is committed. Our concern for democracy in the Balkans at the end of the second World War is but another instance of the liberal disposition to fight for abstract slogans rather than for political interests.

The difference between liberal and nonliberal aims in the international field does not lie in the fact that the former are ideological whereas the latter are not. The ideological character is common to both, since men will support only political aims which they are persuaded are justified before reason and morality. Yet while nonliberal political concepts, such as "Roman Empire," "new order," "living space," "encirclement," "national security," "haves vs. have-nots," and the like, show an immediately recognizable relationship to concrete political aims; liberal concepts, such as "collective security," "democracy," "national self-determination," "justice," "peace," are abstract generalities which may be applied to any political situation but which are not peculiar to any particular one. This difference has far-reaching practical consequences. Since the nonliberal aims are the product of a

concrete political situation, they will necessarily disappear and be replaced by others as soon as they have fulfilled their temporary political function; thus, they will be relatively immune from the danger of being at variance with reality and therefore of falling into disrepute.

The liberal ideologies, on the other hand, are bound, because of their very abstractness, generality, and claim for absolute validity, to be kept alive after they have outlived their political usefulness and thus to be disavowed by the realities of international politics, which, by their very nature, are concrete, specific, and dependent upon time and place. Collective security, universal democracy, permanent and just peace are in the nature of ultimate, ideal goals which may inspire the actions of men and supply standards for the judgment of philosophy and ethics but which are not capable of immediate complete realization through political action. Between them and the political reality there is bound to be a permanent gap. Yet the liberals believe in the possibility of their immediate realization here and now.

From the disappointment in this belief and the sudden awareness of the true nature of the liberal ideology stems the process of "debunking" which has corrupted liberal thought and paralyzed liberal action in the international field. The recognition that the seemingly political goals of liberalism were actually beyond the reach of immediate political realization brought in its wake the distrust in political ideology of any kind. Since the liberal ideology did not keep its promise and thus revealed itself as mere "propaganda," no ideology in the international field could be trusted. Since, furthermore, political aims are still mostly being rationalized in terms of the liberal ideology, they meet condemnation for this reason and regardless of whether they could be justified

in terms of political expediency. The disappointed liberal would not fight for China, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Britain, because he no longer believed in the liberal ideologies of collective security, universal democracy, permanent and just peace. The "good" liberal would fight for those countries because he still believed in those slogans. As a matter of fact, neither of them, arguing in liberal terms, was able to understand the real issue, which was neither China, Ethiopia, Britain, or any other foreign country, nor collective security, universal democracy, permanent and just peace, but the influence upon the national interests, expressed in terms of power politics, of violent changes in the territorial status of those countries. Thus, even the enemies of the liberal slogans are still the victims of the liberal fallacy; intellectually they are still liberals since they are able to think only in liberal terms. Yet, whereas they would refuse to act at all, because all action was bound to fall short of the liberal ideals, the "good" liberal would at least act, even though sometimes on the wrong occasions or with the wrong methods and always for the wrong reasons.